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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

14 May 1958

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

yes

USSR-Africa: The USSR is intensifying its drive to persuade African students to accept trips and scholarships in the Soviet Union. Soviet Embassy officials in Cairo are actively pressing these offers, and at least 50 African students have apparently left for Moscow during the last eight months.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

no

*Lebanon: The army continues to hold the upper hand in Beirut and other major urban centers, but the security situation in the countryside has deteriorated further. Army commander General Shihab fears that opposition elements, abetted by infiltrators from Syria, may soon attempt to move on Beirut from outlying areas. President Chamoun may, in the light of Shihab's assessment that the army's

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loyalty and endurance are being strained by continuing disorders, ask for military support on 24 hour's notice from the United States, Britain, and France. Meanwhile, Chamoun, his supporters, and some of the moderate opposition elements are engaged in intensive political maneuvering.

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III. THE WEST

yes *France-North Africa: The hurried investiture of Pflimlin as premier has temporarily blocked efforts by extremists in Algiers and Paris to force the National Assembly to accept their demands for an all-out war in Algeria to be led by rightists. The new government has taken immediate security measures including a round-up of rightists in Paris, but the possibility of further outbursts in Paris and Algiers cannot be ruled out. In any case, the flouting of civilian authority by the French

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DAILY BRIEF

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military in Algiers--the latest manifestation of the army's dissatisfaction with the politicians in Paris--will make Pflimlin's task of reasserting control extremely difficult.

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[redacted]
[redacted] In Morocco and Tunisia,
the likelihood of incidents involving French troops and
civilians has probably been increased. [redacted]
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yes
*Venezuela: The widespread rioting in Caracas on
the occasion of Vice/President Nixon's visit on 13 May
was apparently carefully planned by Communists. The
rioting was led mainly by students, and gained popular
support from those Venezuelans who resent the fact that
former dictator Perez Jimenez and his security chief
are now living in exile in the United States. [redacted]

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Moscow Intensifies Drive to Attract African Students

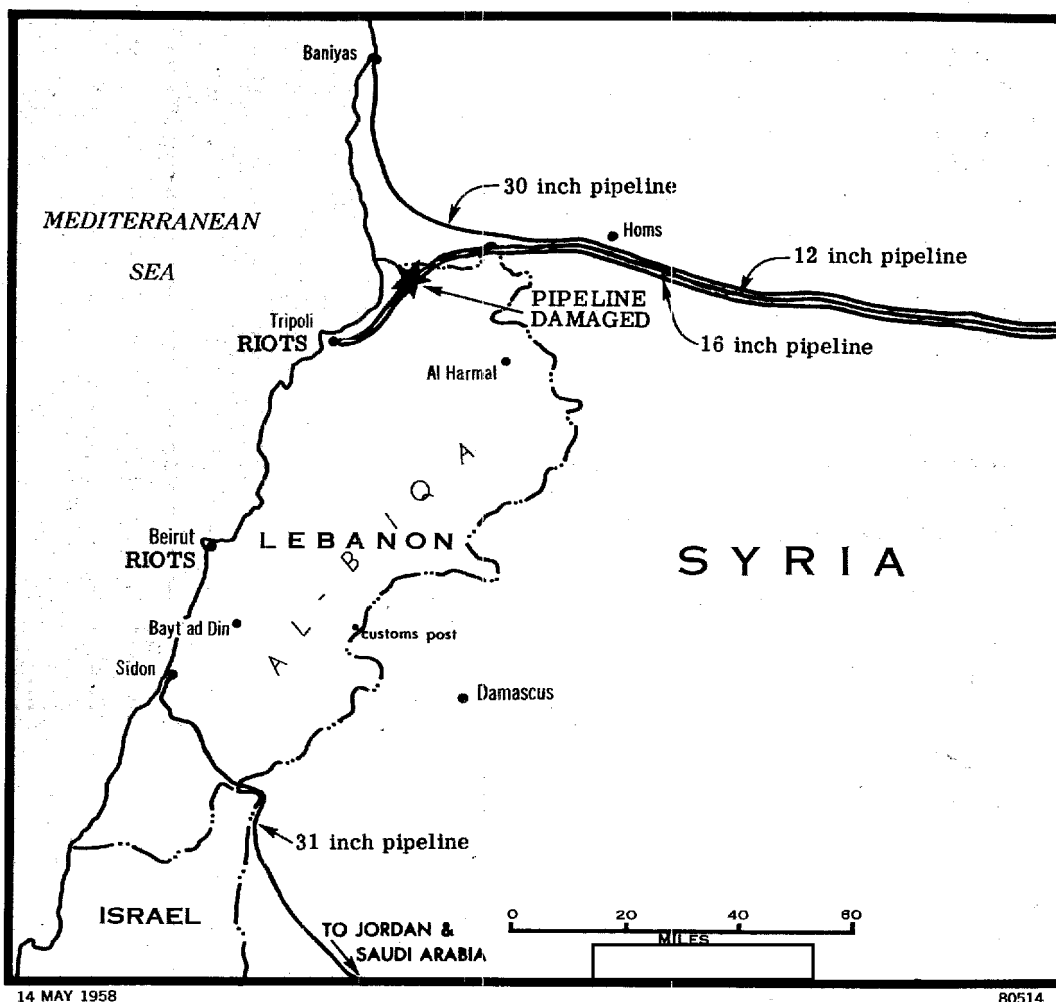
Soviet diplomats are stepping up offers of scholarships and travel in the USSR to African nationalist students now studying in Cairo. A variety of scholarships are offered to enable individual recipients to return from the USSR after two or three months, or remain up to three years with opportunities for "anticolonial information work." The total number of Africans going to Moscow from Cairo since September, according to an American Embassy source, is between 50 and 90. Twelve West African students left Cairo on 2 May and seven other Africans will leave by 15 June.

The current influx of African students, few of whom apparently now are committed to Communism, will advance Soviet area knowledge, and could provide Moscow with the potential instrument of leadership in nationalist movements. Current Soviet tactics are to seek identification with all emerging nationalist elements in Africa. This approach is based on Moscow's view that anti-imperialist activity, which might be initially led by parties or groups far removed from Communist aims, must still be supported.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Lebanese Situation

The Lebanese army appears to retain control of Beirut with major disturbances confined to the Moslem quarter. In other cities, such as Tripoli and Sidon, some clan fighting has broken out with security forces sitting on the sidelines. The situation in the countryside has deteriorated considerably. Army commander Shihab has stated that the army cannot hold out much longer, and that he fears infiltrators from Syria and opposition elements from the Biqa area near the Syrian border and from northern Lebanon may attempt to surround Beirut during the next day or so.

In the mountains, opposition Druze forces led by Kamil Jumblatt are reported fighting with Chamoun supporters around the presidential summer palace at Bayt ad-Din. Pro-Chamoun elements are also said to have engaged about 300 Syrian infiltrators who attacked a gendarmerie post in the al-Harmal region of northern Lebanon. A customs post on the Beirut-Damascus highway was attacked and burned on the night of 12-13 May by 400 men, apparently from Syria. Five Lebanese customs men were killed and six oil tank trucks burned.

In the light of General Shihab's fear that the endurance and loyalty of the army are being overburdened by continuing disorders, Chamoun may request open military support from the United States, Great Britain, and France within the next 24 hours. Prime Minister Sulh was visited on 13 May by two high army officers who implied that Chamoun must step down or the army could not be relied upon.

Chamoun's opposition apparently still hopes that as a result of continued pressure, Chamoun will agree to step down or name Shihab as prime minister. However, so far Chamoun has resisted these efforts. A group of Chamoun's more moderate opponents, known as the "Third Force," is attempting to bring about a compromise solution to the present impasse.

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Despite the apparent failure of the opposition to score advances by their 12 May strike effort, they are now carrying out probing efforts to test the army's willingness to fight back, as well as to weaken the morale of elements loyal to Chamoun. While some of Chamoun's supporters seemed inclined to take "sick leave," others may attempt to strike back at the opposition in some dramatic way, such as by assaults upon opposition leaders or terrorist activities against UAR or Soviet bloc diplomatic installations.

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III. THE WEST

French Military Defies Civilian Authority

The hurried investiture of Popular Republican Pierre Pflimlin temporarily stems the effort by extremists in Paris and Algiers--where European rioters sacked the USIS library and the central government building on 13 May--to force the National Assembly to accept their demands for an all-out rightist-led war in Algeria. Paris faces an explosive problem in dealing with the assumption of authority in Algiers by the paratroop commander and Algiers security chief, General Massu.

The role of his superior, General Balan, is not yet clear, but it will weigh heavily in determining the effectiveness and extent of Paris' effort to reassert its control. Even with immediate and strong security measures taken by the new government, however, the possibility of further rightist outbursts--which may result in another government crisis with increased prospects for the return of General De Gaulle--cannot be ruled out.

While technically Massu's action may be interpreted as a "security measure," his apparent disregard of the civilian authority will encourage further moves by extremists. Any disciplinary action--particularly by a government representing essentially leftist elements--may further the spread of the army's evident dissatisfaction with the regime.

If Massu's move was a calculated effort to pave the way for a coup in Paris, the difficulty of backing down may force him to attempt some further action. There is as yet, however, no indication whether his support is extensive or firm enough to hold up in face of the obvious dangers involved in such an effort.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In Morocco and Tunisia, where new incidents involving French troops or civilians are an increasing possibility, authorities are watching events in Algeria with mounting anxiety. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rioting in Venezuela

The widespread rioting on the occasion of Vice President Nixon's visit to Caracas on 13 May was apparently more carefully planned by its Communist instigators than was the student demonstration of 8 May in Lima, Peru. Preventive action by the Venezuelan government was probably hindered by the complete disruption of the secret police during the overthrow of the Perez Jimenez regime last January when they were a key target of popular resentment.

Many Venezuelans have been bitter about the residence in the United States of Perez Jimenez and his secret police chief. Some have appeared to believe that US oil import restrictions were adopted as a reprisal for their ouster of Perez. Other charges made by the student demonstrators against the United States included racial prejudice and support of dictators in other Latin American countries.

Communists throughout Latin America are likely to be stimulated to new activity by the extent of the Caracas disorders.

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